



Belmont Village presents a major opportunity to create a vibrant town center for the City of Belmont. The Belmont community has long desired a true downtown with opportunities to shop, dine, work, live, and play in a compact, mixed-use environment. Designated a Priority Development Area by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments, the 80-acre Village has convenient access to rail and freeway transportation. Infill development in the area can take advantage of the existing transportation infrastructure to create a compact, high-intensity downtown with new housing and employment opportunities.

1.1 PLANNING AREA AND CONTEXT

Belmont is a quiet residential community in the midst of the culturally and technologically rich Bay Area. The city is located on the San Francisco Peninsula in San Mateo County, with an area of about 4.6 square miles and a population of about 26,200. With an eastern border near the San Francisco Bay, Belmont extends west into the hills near Interstate 280 and the Crystal Springs Reservoirs. Belmont has convenient access to Highway 101, Highway 92, and Interstate 280, as well as the Peninsula's regional commuter rail line, Caltrain. The city is known for its high-quality public schools, numerous open spaces and parks, and quality residential neighborhoods.

This Specific Plan is for Belmont's downtown area, known as Belmont Village. The Planning Area encompasses approximately 80 acres in the eastern portion of the city, at the base of Belmont's western hills. It is centered around Belmont's Caltrain Station, near the intersection of El Camino Real, which roughly runs north-south through the city, and Ralston Avenue, which runs roughly east-west through the city. The Caltrain railway is located on an elevated berm and runs parallel to the eastern side of El Camino Real for the length of the Planning Area. The Caltrain Station is located to the northeast of the El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue intersection.



The Specific Plan aims to create a vibrant, mixed-use downtown around the Caltrain station, in an area currently developed with low-scale shopping centers.

The Planning Area is bound by Wessex Way, Hiller Street and the City limits on the east, and Sixth Avenue from Broadway Street to Hill Street and Middle Road on the west. Figure 1-1 shows the location of Belmont Village within the City of Belmont. The precise boundaries of Belmont Village are shown in Figure 1-2.

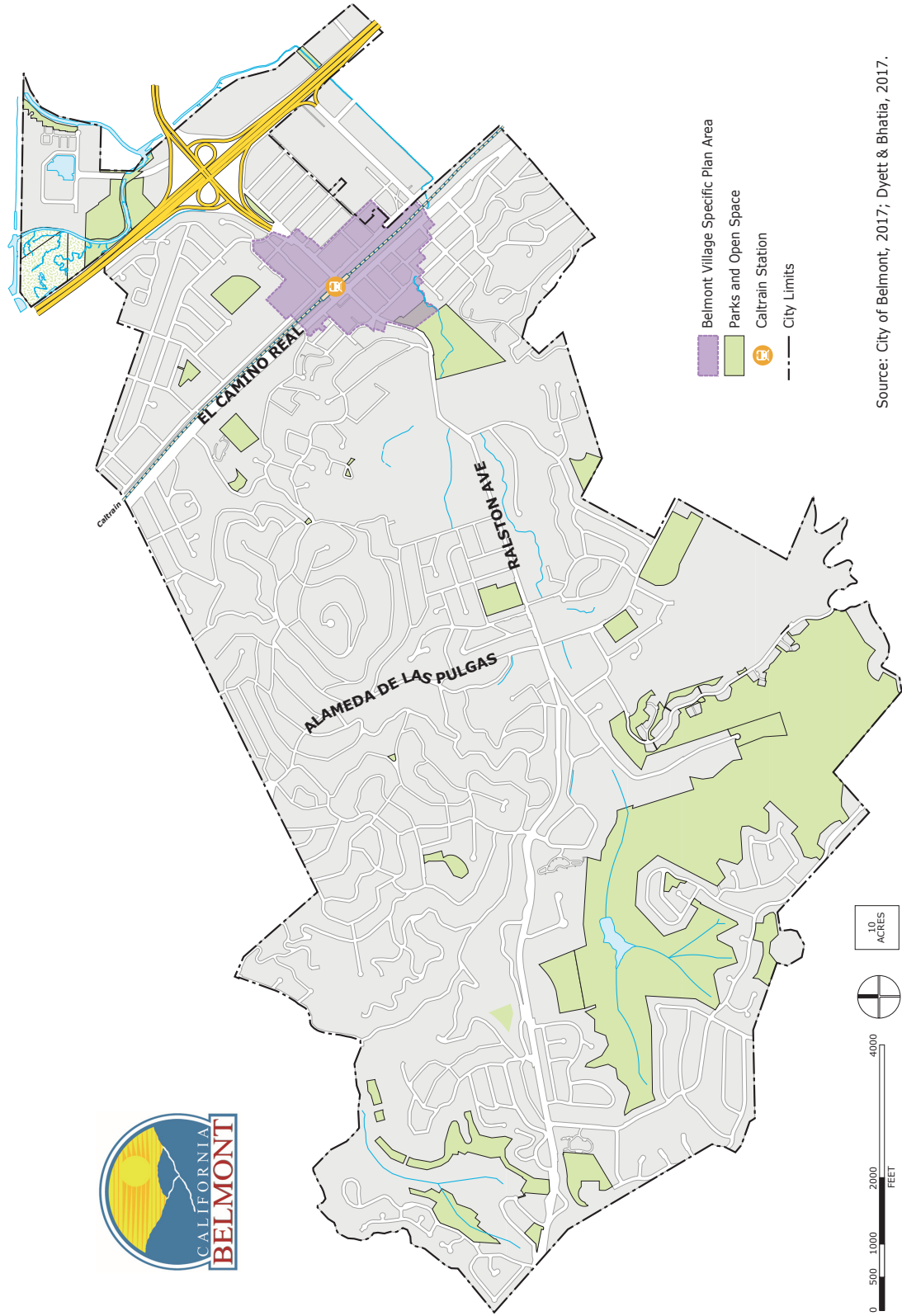
PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA

A Priority Development Area (PDA) is an area within an existing community that has been identified for future growth because of its proximity to transit, jobs, shopping, and other services. Local city governments, the Association of Bay Area Governments, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission designated PDAs across the region as part of the Bay Area's State-mandated 2013 Sustainable Communities Strategy (also known as Plan Bay Area). The Belmont Village area has been designated as a PDA for the city of Belmont because of its potential to support new housing and employment near transit.

The City undertook this Specific Plan in order to meet the demand for housing, offices, and shopping and to realize the community's vision of creating an attractive, mixed use, and vibrant downtown. This Specific Plan creates a structure for a walkable, transit-oriented town center with a mix of land uses, which thereby encourages walking, biking, and transit trips and minimizes vehicle trips. This type of development can accommodate reasonable growth and minimize impacts on local roadways while preserving Belmont's existing residential neighborhoods in the hills. The Plan will strive to fulfill the community's vision for the area, preserve and enhance the Village's livability, and allow for new growth, economic activity, and investment.

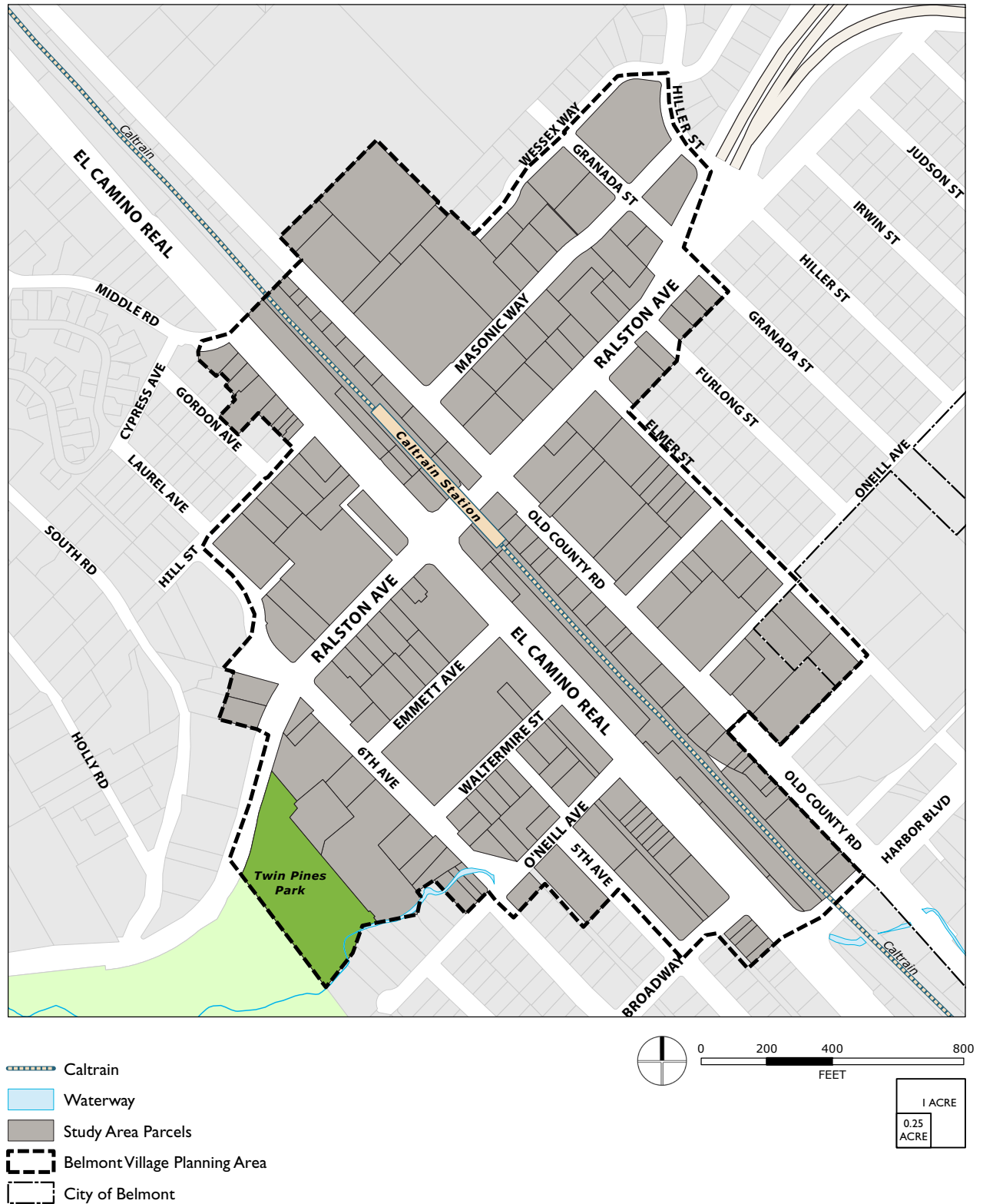
This Specific Plan not only establishes the vision for the Village, but also provides specific policies, standards, and capital improvement projects that are necessary to achieve the vision. It provides detailed regulations for land uses and standards for building form and street design. The Plan sets forth the public improvements and services needed to serve the Village's current and future residents and workers, including streets, community facilities, sewer and water facilities, and storm drainage. It also includes an implementation program with timelines and responsibilities, as well as a strategy for financing necessary infrastructure improvements.

FIGURE 1-1: PLANNING AREA CONTEXT



Source: City of Belmont, 2017; Dyett & Bhatia, 2017.

FIGURE 1-2: PLANNING AREA



Source: City of Belmont, 2014; San Mateo County Assessor's Parcel Database, 2014

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

1.2 PURPOSE, VISION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The Specific Plan aims to enhance Belmont's identity by creating a pedestrian-scaled, mixed-use downtown.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Belmont Village Specific Plan will serve as the land use, circulation, and infrastructure regulatory document that governs the development of the Planning Area. Upon adoption, this Plan will supersede the 1990 Downtown Specific Plan.

VISION STATEMENT

Realize Belmont Village's potential as the city's center of civic life with a unique sense of place. Create an attractive, vibrant, mixed use town center for Belmont, offering shopping, restaurants, entertainment, employment, and residential uses in a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections so that residents, visitors, and workers can walk, bike, and take transit. Design streets and public spaces to create a lively and attractive public realm with a distinctive identity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles emerged from community and decision-maker input throughout the overall planning process for the Belmont Village Specific Plan. Together, these Guiding Principles support the overall vision for the Village and are reflected in the goals, policies, and implementation measures of this Specific Plan.

Create an Identity and Sense of Place. Enhance the Planning Area's identity as Belmont's town center, building on successful Downtown revitalization efforts. Foster a unique sense of place that establishes Belmont's identity in the region by developing the Planning Area as a mixed-use, pedestrian-scaled, transit-oriented district.

Promote Mixed Uses and Increased Population. Establish a balance of housing, retail, office, and entertainment uses across the Village. Allow greater intensity and density of development. Ensure long-term economic sustainability by expanding the Downtown commercial core and accommodating a broader array of uses and activities. Increase the residential and employment populations in and around the Downtown commercial core to support growth in commercial uses and businesses in the Village.

Support Housing Development. Support a diversity of housing opportunities in the Village to meet the needs of the Belmont community, including affordable housing for low, very low, and extremely low income households. Provide housing choice for both longtime residents and newcomers to Belmont.



A variety of housing types is needed to fit the needs of all Belmont residents.

Catalyze Private Investment through Strategic Public Investment. Prioritize capital improvements and programs that will support infill development, encourage private reinvestment, and provide critical public services for the Planning Area. Strategically develop the land assets owned by the City of Belmont so that the projects contribute to the revitalization of the Village and serve as catalysts for other development in the area.

Improve Multimodal Mobility. Improve connectivity, accessibility, and safety for all modes of transportation in the Village. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the east and west sides of the



The Specific Plan looks to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit uses in the Planning Area.

Village and to key destinations within the Planning Area, including the Caltrain Station. Actively manage parking in the Village and encourage drivers to “park once” and walk or bike to destinations.

Promote Infill Development with Quality Architectural Design. Promote compact development patterns on infill development sites. Encourage design diversity and visual richness by promoting a variety of architectural building styles, including contemporary-styled buildings, while ensuring cohesiveness and building design that is flexible, in order to accommodate a range of uses and changes over time.

Enhance Public Realm, Infrastructure, and Attractions. Establish a unified image for Downtown and enhance the public realm with consistent streetscapes, improved sidewalks, and greater opportunities for community gathering and outdoor dining. Make public infrastructure improvements as necessary and ensure public services and facilities are available for current and future Planning Area populations. Continue to promote more activities and attractions in the Village, including more restaurants, retail stores, entertainment venues, and community, art, and cultural events and programming.



The Specific Plan aims to enhance the public realm in the Planning Area by improving infrastructure for multi-modal mobility, such as sidewalks and bike lanes.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In 2015, the City of Belmont began the process of creating the Belmont Village Specific Plan. Over the past decade, Belmont Village has been the subject of numerous planning and visioning exercises, and the area has seen some development activity, but its full potential remains to be realized. Through the community outreach for the city's General Plan Update (initiated in 2014), the community affirmed that the vision and objectives for the Village that were articulated in the city's 2003 Vision Statement are still true: the Belmont community desires a true town center with living, shopping, working, and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors alike, in a vibrant mixed-use setting.

The PDA designation qualified the City of Belmont to receive funding to develop an implementation plan for the Village area as well as additional grants for specific projects and public improvements consistent with the General Plan. In 2014, the City received a grant from the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) to complete the implementation plan through the creation of the Belmont Village Specific Plan.

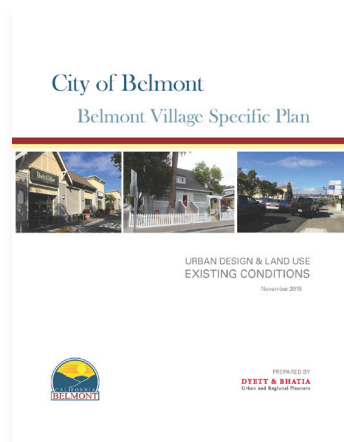
Initiated in autumn 2015, the planning process for the Belmont Village Specific Plan involved a combination of technical analysis and community input. Each step in the process was designed to allow the planning team to hear from residents, business and property owners, decision-makers, and other community members about their needs and values, as well as to allow the public to provide feedback and formulate ideas throughout the planning process.



Belmont residents and stakeholders have been able to share their vision for Belmont Village through community workshops and stakeholder interviews.

As part of the community outreach effort for the preparation of the Specific Plan, the first workshop was held at Belmont City Hall on October 6, 2015 and provided attendees with an opportunity to share their vision for Belmont Village. In addition, the planning team interviewed 14 stakeholders on October 7, 2015 and two stakeholders on October 16, 2015. Two informational events were held with the Downtown Neighborhood Association/Sunnyslope National Night Out (August 2015) and the Harbor Industrial Association (February 2016). The planning team also held a joint study session with the Belmont City Council and Planning Commission on December 15, 2015 and an additional study session with the City Council on August 23, 2016.

The consultant team also prepared existing conditions reports on urban design, land use, real estate market conditions, and circulation, which addressed key planning issues, opportunities, and possible policy directions. Together with feedback from the community on goals and priorities, these reports laid the groundwork for development and assessment of land use, urban design, and transportation alternatives and policies for the Village. The next phase of work focused on developing and considering land use and circulation alternatives.



The Existing Conditions Report addresses key planning issues and opportunities.

Two concept plans with land use and circulation alternatives were presented at a second community workshop on February 26, 2016. The planning team also held a workshop on March 21, 2016 to identify issues and opportunities in the Village with students and faculty at Notre Dame de Namur University, which is located to the west of the Planning Area. Based on community feedback, a preferred plan for land use and circulation was prepared and presented at a joint study session and approved by the City Council and Planning Commission on April 12, 2016. The draft Specific Plan was then prepared over spring and summer of 2016, focusing on land use, mobility, design and development standards, infrastructure and public services, environmental hazards, and implementation measures.

Following a study session with the City Council on August 23, 2016, the Public Review Draft Specific Plan was prepared and released for public study and comment in October 2016. The Specific Plan has been further revised to ensure consistency with the concurrent planning efforts that are all being evaluated under the same program EIR. A Draft EIR accompanies this Specific Plan, which also evaluates the General Plan, Phase I Zoning Regulations, and Climate Action Plan.

1.4 LEGAL CONTEXT AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

California Government Code (Section 65450) states that planning agencies may prepare specific plans for the systematic implementation of the general plan for all or part of the area covered by the general plan. “A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:

- The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan. *This requirement is addressed in Chapter 2, Land Use.*
- The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan. *This requirement is addressed in Chapter 3, Mobility; and Chapter 5, Infrastructure and Public Services.*
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable. *This requirement is addressed in Chapter 4, Design and Development Standards; and Chapter 6, Environmental Sustainability, Health, and Safety.*
- A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).” *This requirement is addressed in Chapter 7, Implementation.*

In addition, “the specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan.” Refer to Chapter 7 for a summary of the relationship between the Specific Plan and goals, policies, and actions in Belmont’s General Plan.

The Belmont Village Specific Plan is consistent with these requirements of State law.



The Belmont Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL PLAN

State law states that specific plans can only be adopted or amended if they are consistent with the adopted local general plan. The intent of the Belmont Village Specific Plan is consistent with the goals of the General Plan. While the General Plan Update addresses issues relevant to the entire city, the Specific Plan focuses specifically on the buildout of the Belmont Village, providing detail on policies and implementation strategies to achieve the community’s vision of the Village. The General Plan Land Use Diagram identifies the entire Village Planning Area with its own designation, “Belmont Village Mixed Use,” allowing the Specific Plan to provide detailed guidance on specific land use districts and densities and intensities for the Village. The General Plan establishes the Village as Belmont’s primary area for future growth, including residential and employment growth; it establishes the Village as one of the city’s focus areas for economic growth. The General Plan policies direct this area to become a focus of transit-oriented development, with a mix of retail commercial, office, entertainment, and high-density residential uses. The General Plan defers to the Belmont Village Specific Plan on specific detail and implementation policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

In addition to the Specific Plan and General Plan, the City prepared two other significant planning documents concurrently in order to ensure that each plan best supports the goals of all others. The Phase I Zoning Regulations provide a zoning framework to ensure new development conforms to the General Plan, serving as a precursor to a comprehensive rewrite of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. In addition, the Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides a plan for addressing Belmont’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and helps to mitigate any GHG/climate change impacts associated with the General Plan and Specific Plan, as well as future development projects in Belmont.

An accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been released to inform the community and decision-makers on the environmental implications of this complete set of plans, as well as potential alternatives. The Specific Plan, like the other plans evaluated under the EIR, is “self-mitigating” in that it includes policies and programs to mitigate potential significant environmental impacts associated with development under the Plan, where possible.

1.5 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The following chapters of this document present guiding goals and accompanying policies; design standards and guidelines; and recommendations for implementation:

- **Chapter 2: Land Use.** Presents key features of the Planning Area, the Land Use Diagram and classifications, density and intensity standards, potential new development at Plan buildout, affordable housing strategies, and historic resources.
- **Chapter 3: Mobility.** Addresses pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, automobile circulation, transit and transportation demand management measures, and parking strategies.
- **Chapter 4: Design and Development Standards.** Provides guidance for the development of the built environment in the Planning Area, from streetscape improvements and wayfinding, to detailed development standards and building design guidelines. In addition, the chapter presents illustrative concepts for three areas in the Village.
- **Chapter 5: Infrastructure and Public Services.** Includes direction for public utilities and services to ensure all development in the Planning Area is accommodated by adequate city infrastructure and services. Describes the park, school, and community facilities in the Planning Area to serve current and future residents.
- **Chapter 6: Environmental Sustainability, Health, and Safety.** Addresses key environmental issues that will potentially have an impact on the design and location of new development, including hydrology and flooding, geology and seismicity, hazardous materials and air contaminants, biological resources, and noise.
- **Chapter 7: Implementation.** Outlines measures for consistency with the General Plan and Municipal Code, phasing, implementation mechanisms, and financing strategies for infrastructure and public improvements and a public parking garage.
- **Appendix A: Belmont Village Zoning Regulations.** Amends the City of Belmont Zoning Ordinance, specifying allowable uses, development standards, parking standards, permitting procedures, and other applicable regulations for the Belmont Village Planning Area.

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